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vertically therefrom, said projection comprising at least two flanges each having top and bottom surfaces, said surfaces comprising at least one angled portion.

IN THE DRAWINGS

Amend Figure 18 to include reference characters "24" and "25" as indicated in the red-ink copy attached to the enclosed Letter to Official Draftsperson.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, and 22 have been cancelled. Claims 2, 9, and 10 have been amended. Claims 2, 9-21, and 23-25 are now pending.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1, 3-8, 10, and 12-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent G 86 04 004.9 (translation copy).

Claims 1, 3-8, and 22 have been cancelled; the rejection is moot with respect to those claims. Amended claim 10 is not anticipated by German Patent G 86 04 004.9 (translation copy). Claims 12-21 depend from claim 10, directly or indirectly through an intermediary claim. Thus all pending claims contain allowable subject matter. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner allow the pending claims.

Double Patenting

Claims 1-25 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 63-93 of copending Application No. 09/436,317.

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Applicant is filing a terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c). Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the provisional rejection.


For the Examiner's convenience, a clean version of all pending claims is attached at the end of this document.

Conclusion

Claims 2, 9-21, and 23-25 are pending in the application. It is respectfully submitted that claims 2, 9-21, and 23-25 are patentable in view of the art. In light of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested. All amendments are made in a good faith effort to advance the prosecution on the merits. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

2. [A panel as claimed in claim 1,] A multi-directional laminate flooring panel for use in constructing a floor, said panel comprising:

a top surface, a bottom surface, a middle substrate, and sides extending between the top and bottom surfaces, wherein said sides have identical grooved profiles, wherein the thickness of the panel ranges from about .240 inches to about .320 inches.

9. [A panel as claimed in claim 1,] A multi-directional laminate flooring panel for use in constructing a floor, said panel comprising:

a top surface, a bottom surface and sides extending between the top and bottom surfaces, [further comprising] and a middle substrate between the top and bottom surfaces, wherein said sides have identical grooved profiles, and wherein the middle substrate of the panel comprises a material selected from the group of materials consisting of medium density fiberboard, high density fiberboard, wood/plastic compositions, woods, ceramics, unfilled plastics, filled plastics, closed-cell rigid foams, and combinations thereof.

10. A multi-directional laminate flooring system comprising:

at least two panels, wherein each panel comprises a top surface, a bottom surface and sides extending between the top and bottom surfaces, wherein said sides have identical recessed profiles; and

a connector separate from said at least two panels for connecting the at least two panels together to form a floor[.] , wherein the connector comprises a base having a projection

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extending vertically therefrom, said projection comprising at least two flanges each having top and bottom surfaces, said surfaces comprising at least one angled portion.

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